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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

ON COLORING PHOTOGRAPHS.

BY EMMA HAYWOOD.

COLORING photographs artistically is by no means so easy a task as might at first sight be imagined, and indeed just to tint them with good effect is not much less difficult than working them up to a high state of finish. One great drawback lies in the fact that the photograph itself is frequently very inartistic, and the disposition of light and shade entirely opposed to the qualities desired by a portrait painter.

The photographer studies to illuminate every part of the image reflected in his lens, taking care at the same time that the boots and hands of his sitter are as far as possible on the same plane as the face, in order that they may keep their true proportions.

Now, it is obvious that if radical changes are attempted failure will certainly be the result as far as preserving the likeness is concerned. It is, therefore, well to recognize this fact at starting, and, taking a photograph for what it really is, endeavor only to add nature's coloring to what must certainly be looked upon as nature's forms. So, instead of entirely obliterating the photograph beneath your coloring, endeavor to utilize its tones wherever practicable, and to this end be careful in your choice of a copy for your purpose.

It is a great mistake to select a faint impression, for you lose all the benefit of the half tones which should add force to the finished picture; at the same time it will be difficult to make your labor tell on impressions that are too dark and over-toned. A happy medium is desirable, and for coloring a reddish brown tone is preferable to the violet tint that is generally the result of over exposure, and a consequent lengthened immersion in the toning bath.

Always obtain two copies of the photograph you are about to work on, and put them side by side. This will greatly assist you in keeping the resemblance. If you can obtain one or more sittings from the living original in addition so much the better. If not you must have careful notes as to the color of complexion, hair, eyes and any other special characteristic details.

In the hints I am about to give I shall refer more particularly to the painting of photographs printed on albumenized paper, as it is with those the amateur generally has to do. The photographs on salted paper are more in use for professional purposes, such as colored work for lithography, etc. You will require, in addition to the best water colors such as you would use for ordinary water color painting, a bottle of Chinese white and two or three good sable brushes of assorted sizes. A very fine one will be needed for painting the markings of the eyes, lips and nostrils. Provide yourself also with some gum water made from the best gum arabic and a small bottle of liquid colorless ox gall.

I take it for granted the photograph is properly mounted on card-board. Secure it with thumb tacks on to a small drawing board side by side with the duplicate. It is a savings to the eyes to cover the board with green baize, especially if the work be very fine. In this case a magnifying glass will also be found of great service.

The next question is how to make the color lay evenly. Every one knows who has tried it how greasy the surface of a photograph appears to be directly you apply a wash of color. Various preparations are recommended to obviate this, but if the photograph be a small one there is nothing to equal the application of the tongue. It acts like a charm; however, some persons might object to this method, and for large surfaces it is scarcely feasible. There is a liquid especially prepared for the purpose by Newman, of London, and obtainable, I believe, in this country. It is greatly used by photographers. Some recommend a water solution of isinglass mixed with a few drops of alcohol, or liquid ox gall diluted with a little water.

The colors chosen for the first washes must depend greatly not only on the complexion of the individual, but on the general character of the photograph. Thin washes with transparent pigments will answer on light prints, whereas opaque or semi-opaque colors will give a far better effect on dark points. The following list of colors will meet all requirements for any kind of complexion: Scarlet vermilion, rose madder, raw sienna, burnt sienna, Nenetian red, yellow ochre, Indian yellow, lemon yellow and cobalt blue.

The first thing to be done after selecting the required tint for the first flat wash is to go over the whole of the face with a full brush. If the high lights of the print be very pure let the wash be delicate, if of a greyish hue the wash must be stronger and more opaque. For a fair and delicate complexion a thin wash of scarlet vermilion is excellent to begin with.

When the first wash is thoroughly dry, take some rose madder mixed with scarlet vermilion and tenderly add a little color to the cheeks and lips, then with a fainter tint of the same mixture softly tinge the chin, nostrils, tips of the ears, upper

eyelids and just over the eyebrows, also the tips of the fingers and knuckles, having previously passed a first wash over the hands similar to that on the face. Next mix a little raw sienna or yellow ochre and cobalt, and with delicate touches go over the tones between the highest lights and deepest shadows, also the outer edges in the shadow side, portions of the lower jaw, the sockets of the eyes and the edges of the hair where it meets the flesh, maybe the blue more perceptible on the temples, and where the skin is thin and shows the veins through. In this you must be guided by your model if fortunate enough to obtain sittings. Touch in a little more vermilion and raw sienna on the darkest parts, but with great care and delicacy. The colors must in all cases be applied after the first wash with scarcely perceptible touches, and gradually worked up to the required depth, at the same time blending and softening them skillfully one with the other. If the eye is blue use cobalt and indigo, if grey mix a little burnt sienna with indigo, if brown raw umber, burnt sienna or Vandyke brown, according to the shade required and the tone of the print. Sometimes it will be necessary also to use a little Chinese white mixed with the color. If there is a brilliant speck of light in the eye indicate it with Chinese white, but do not add this speck of light if it is not seen in the photograph.

Proceed to strengthen the lines dividing the lips, the eyelashes, the line of the eyelids, the eyebrows and the nostrils. We may now turn our attention to the hair. Here again much will depend on the color of the print. Sometimes a wash of raw umber, toned with a little ivory black, makes a capital color, or for light hair yellow ochre and black, for dark hair Vandyke brown is good, or a mixture of crimson lake indigo and raw or burnt umber.

The first wash being dry, the markings and shadows are strengthened with either raw umber or burnt sienna and black. The high lights should be greyer in tone, with a little Chinese white added. Moustache and beard may be treated in the same way.

It is time to put in the background, so that we may judge of its effects in contrast to the face. It should as a rule be very quiet in tone. In some cases a gray blue is effective, especially if the complexion be fair. A gray green is also good, made by mixing indigo and raw sienna or Antwerp blue and burnt sienna. Yellow ochre mixed with blue black also makes a good background color. Apply the first wash on the background freely with a full brush. When this is dry make it even by means of hatching strokes carefully blended. Treat the draperies in the same manner, using a little Chinese white on the high lights where necessary.

For gold ornaments use raw umber, raw sienna, with pale Naples yellow for the high lights. For giving effect to lace ruffles or trimmings the Chinese white may be raised in places to accentuate the pattern. Shade the lace with yellow ochre, cobalt blue and black mixed. Having gone over the whole photograph, so that no part of it is left uncolored, review the work carefully, and see that it harmonizes throughout, compare it attentively with the untouched copy and see that you have added to rather than detracted from the general strength and breadth of light and shade. If you have not succeeded in this then study wherein you have failed and repair your errors without delay.

In order that the colors may not look dull on the photograph, which is apt to be the case when the paper is highly albumenized, use a very little gum water with the colors throughout the painting after the first wash has been laid on, but in using the gum water great caution is necessary, for in the event of too much of it being mixed with the colors they will peel off and crack in places after a while, so that your labor will have been in vain and a spoiled photograph the only result. A little experience is the best teacher in such matters, and I warn my readers beforehand, in order to encourage them to persevere, that probably their first efforts will not be very successful, since the difficulties attendant on photograph painting are peculiar to that particular branch of art, and require some practice to overcome them.

THE SALMAGUNDI CLUB.

AN election of officers at the Salmagundi Club, on March 1st, resulted as follows:—President, C. Y. Turner; Vice-President, B. R. Fitz; Recording Secretary, R. C. Minor; Corresponding Secretary, Jos. Lauber; Treasurer, A. C. Morgan.

Executive Committee.—C. Y. Turner, B. R. Fitz, A. C. Morgan, C. H. Eaton, H. Hamilton, Bruce Crane, A. Schilling.

Trustees.—The President, Vice-President, Treasurer, C. H. Eaton, W. V. Birney.

Art Committee.—C. H. Eaton, Horatio Walker, Percy Moran, F. C. Jones, R. F. Bloodgood.

The Salmagundi is the only art club of any importance in the country to which artists exclusively are admitted. The club has its home at 121 5th Avenue, where, besides its social meetings, it has monthly or bi-monthly exhibitions of pictures by its members. Its membership numbers at present 115.